
CENTRAL REGION COUNCIL ON WORKFORCE SERVICES
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 25, 2004
12:30 p.m.

Presiding: Jane Reister Conard, Chair

Present: Cynthia Brothers, Greg Diven, Deirdre Darby Duffin, Norman Fitzgerald, Representative Brent Goodfellow, Bev Graham, Sandra Hemmert (representing Stephen Ronnenkamp), Todd Henriksen, John Hill, Paul Jackson, Douglas Johnston, Jon Pierpont, Steven Rosenberg, Karen Silver, Kerry Steadman, Russ Thelin, Dean Walker, Megan Wiesen, Commissioner Gene D. White and Julie Zimmerman.

Excused: Edward Armour, Allan Ayoub, Charles Daud, Stephen Ronnenkamp and Kevin Schofield.

Absent: Susan Archibeque, Louie Silveira and Melva Sine.

Guests: Edie Fauver, Trisha Hurley-United Kingdom-Job Centre Plus, Shawn Kelly-DOL, Steve Matthews-United Kingdom-Job Centre Plus, Jill Merritt-jMerritt Alliance, Akilah Messado, Andrew Page-United Kingdom-Job Centre Plus, James Robson, Billie Smith, Susan Smith-Manpower, Gordon Swensen-DOR and Ali Wilkinson-Zions Bank.

Staff: Karla Aguirre, Rebecca Banner, Sarah Brenna, Leno Franco, Steve Leyba, Diane Lovell, Melissa Olsen, Michael Sullivan and Verene Froisland.

Call to Order & Announcements

Jane Reister Conard, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m.

Ms. Conard introduced the guests from the United Kingdom – Trisha Hurley, Steve Matthews and Andrew Page. Shawn Kelly of the Department of Labor was their host.

Ms. Conard introduced two guests that have expressed an interest in Council membership - Ali Wilkinson, Vice President at Zions Bank, Women's Financial Division and Susan Smith, Vice President, Manpower at Utah.

Ms. Conard then acknowledged Billie Smith, Manager of the South County Employment Center.

Ms. Conard followed with an announcement of Bo Hall's resignation from the Council. He resigned due to a change in his position at the Salt Lake/Tooele Applied Technology Center. A plaque will be sent to him to acknowledge the service that he gave to both the Youth Council and the Central Region Council. The interim campus president, Linda Fife, will be replacing Mr. Hall on the Regional and Youth Councils.

Ms. Conard gave a report on the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Conference that she attended on March 14-16 in Washington D.C. All Regional Chairs from Utah attended along with Monteen Gordon, State Council Director. The workshops consisted of hour-long

presentations on best practices of different organizations throughout the Country. Ms. Conard commented on three.

- Ken Walker, Chair of the Mountainland Regional Council, presented with a couple of people from Oregon about business outreach (what Utah calls business-to-business services). It was very well attended and one of the best workshops at the conference.
- There was a presentation about a youth program in Oregon. This workshop was very good and stimulating – mostly because it sounded a lot like the local Youth EmployAbility Services (YES) Program.
- Another presentation focused on about disabled workers. Research funds were granted through NAWB. Two business professors from MBA programs presented their findings on a survey of Fortune 500 companies and how disabled workers are hired and placed. They found out that there is a need for outreach to employers to educate them and their workforce regarding acceptance of the disabled. They also said the key factor they found in terms of the differences in the rate of employment of disabled people among these companies was whether or not the CEO and the CEO's office employed a person with a disability.

Ms. Conard then noted that Utah has the appropriate structure and is “doing it right” because it has centralized services whereas many other states remain decentralized in their organizational structure. She went on to express the benefits associated with the fact that Utah has Regional Councils to ensure that local needs aren't over looked and to help stimulate private sector education and involvement.

Ms. Conard then stated that attending the Conference was worthwhile and she hopes to pass on some of her enthusiasm to the Council members.

Ms. Conard announced that the SL Chamber of Commerce Giant Steps Award Luncheon is scheduled on March 30th. Kathleen Gage, a former member of the Council, will receive an award in the small, home-based business category. Ed Armour will attend on behalf of the Central Region Council.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes – Central Region Council meeting of Thursday, February 26, 2004 and Executive Committee meeting of Thursday, March 11, 2004.

Karen Silver moved to approve the minutes from the Central Region Council meeting of Thursday, February 26, 2004 and Executive Committee meeting of Thursday, March 11, 2004. Paul Jackson seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. The motion passed.

Executive Committee Report & 2005 Goals

Ms. Conard stated that the Executive Committee is working hard to fill the membership vacancies based on LMI industry projections – retail, finance/banking, health and construction. We have received a reply from the letter that was sent to Randy Emery, State Council Chair, regarding our recommendation that the training limit be increased from \$5,000 to \$7,000. We also received a favorable response from our request that there be a study of the Family Employment Program (FEP) time limits. Ms. Conard then stated that Kerry Steadman suggested at our last Executive Committee meeting that we begin sharing success stories and program accomplishments. She then referred to a handout containing a “kudos” e-mail sent to Brook Mecham, Sr. Employment Counselor in South County, from a former customer. Ms. Conard then gave her compliments to Billie Smith and the regional staff.

Ms. Conard concluded her report by referring to the Executive Committee's goals for 2005.

Committee Reports

Basic Needs – Ms. Silver stated that the Basic Needs Committee will be reporting to and updating the Council regarding their research into the following issues and projects:

- the interim study of the FEP time limits
- transportation issues – including the 5600 West bus route issue and the need for improved transportation services in Salt Lake's west side area.
- how training dollars are being used
- the possibility of providing child care for customers looking for a job and providing emergency child care for customers who have recently left the FEP cash assistance program.
- the non-English immigrants who bring their parents to this country thinking that there is an abundance of social services to help – then they find out that services may be limited and they can't get back to their Country.

Marketing/Retreat – Greg Diven stated that the Marketing Committee has identified their goals and will be discussing them further at the upcoming retreat. Mr. Diven then spoke concerning the retreat. The theme is "Maximizing Human Potential" and Michael Glauser, OCM Managing Partner will be the facilitator. The retreat will begin at 7:30 a.m. with a continental breakfast at the Matheson Courthouse in Room W19. The retreat will conclude at 12:40 following lunch. At that time a tour of the Matheson Courthouse is scheduled for those interested or, members may adjourn to the State Council Meeting that starts at 1:00 p.m. at the Metro Employment Center.

Facilities – Norman Fitzgerald stated that staff has charted the demographics needed to help determine the needs for existing and new employment centers.

Cynthia Brothers asked about the Tooele Employment Center status.

Mr. Fitzgerald responded by stating that at this point the Tooele Employment Center is on hold. He then stated that the major problem with the Tooele Employment Center is that the current lease to which the department is tied expires in 2008. Mr. Fitzgerald continued by stating that it is his understanding that a new facility has been approved in northern Utah only and all others have been put on hold.

Training & Development – Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the following goals were decided and will be further discussed at the upcoming retreat:

- Assure training and available resources are constantly updated or established to meet changing, technical and employer needs with emphasis on employing the unemployed focusing on market demand skills. To do this we will work smarter by encouraging review of training programs and vendors to ensure quality training and high placement rates to include economic evaluation of return on investment.
- Encourage, advise and utilize preparatory training facilities to establish basic transferable skills through close liaison with appropriate Central Region staff.

Youth Council – Mr. Jackson stated that the Youth Council had a great meeting on March 15th. The Youth Council members discussed how it ought to structure and frame itself and its objectives for the future. There was great insight and input from the Council members. Mr.

Jackson then stated that the Council members discussed and developed the following preliminary goals for 2005:

- Assess and prioritize workforce service needs, recognizing that we have finite number of resources and not enough to meet the needs of our service area.
- Identify the available services and collaborate and where we can, leverage resources as opposed to just having expenditures.

Executive Roundtable

Mr. Diven stated that the first meeting of the Executive Roundtable will be held on Monday, March 29th at 10:00 a.m. He encouraged anyone who has ideas and would like to still be involved to attend the meeting. The plans for the meeting include; determining the feasibility of the roundtable, making decisions about how to organize the roundtable, inviting the necessary individuals to be involved and setting the first roundtable session by May or June.

Legislative Update

Sarah Brenna announced that she recently accepted a new position as a Program Manager in the DWS Service Delivery Support Division and will have responsibility for TANF, general assistance, refugee assistance and a number of other categorical programs. Ms. Brenna then introduced Michael Sullivan, her replacement and the new DWS Director of Legislative Affairs, Customer Relations and Communications.

Ms. Brenna began her report by stating that the Department had a very successful legislative session – all of the bills that the Department pursued passed. A handout summarizing the 2004 General Session was then distributed and discussed. Ms. Brenna indicated that the legislature approved a 1% cost of living increase for employees and a one-time bonus of 1% that will be given most likely around Christmas time. The Department received all of the funding that was requested for general assistance (about \$2.4 million), the money needed for the increase in food stamp caseloads and match rates and the money needed to finish the development of the eREP program. The Department did not receive the requested childcare funding.

Ms. Brenna then addressed WIA and TANF Reauthorization, noting that the TANF continuing resolution expires on March 31st. She then asked Mr. Sullivan to make a few remarks to the Council.

Mr. Sullivan summarized his background and indicated that he has 5 years of media experience from New York and Chicago, 5 years of public charity on the national/international scene and about 15 years as the President of the second largest art material wholesaler in the United States. He also worked at *The Enterprise* and from there he came to the Department of Workforce Services.

Ms. Conard thanked Ms. Brenna for a job well done over the past several years. She then noted that the Council would look forward to working with Mr. Sullivan.

Representative Brent Goodfellow stated that Ms. Brenna has done a great job at the Legislature for a number of years and asked the Council to give her a round of applause.

Economic Forecast and LMI Update

James Robson distributed and discussed handouts reflecting demographic and LMI information for Salt Lake and Tooele Counties. The official unemployment rate for Utah was 4.8% in

February of 2004. Salt Lake County was 4.9% and Tooele County was 7.6%. Mr. Robson then noted that local government shows growth – that is primarily education related.

A brief question and answer period followed Mr. Robson's report.

Regional Director's Report

Jon Pierpont stated that the Central Region is struggling to meet its training obligation and expenditure standards in both the WIA Adult and WIA Dislocated Worker fund categories. He then distributed and discussed a handout which outlined 3 initiatives, (of about 20), that are in the conceptual phases on how to improve the obligation and expenditures. The three initiatives are:

1. Establish for each Employment Center Manager specific and measurable targets for Obligations for FY2004-2005 in both WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker categories.
2. Require every Employment Center to do the following:
 - Consistent/standardized office pathways for Training Customers.
 - Provide all interested customers an opportunity to view the WIA Training Video/Orientation.
 - Provide customers with consistent educational information on WIA programs and eligibility requirements.
3. All Employment Counselors, Supervisors and Managers attend the soon-to-be-scheduled Training Conference.

Mr. Pierpont continued by stating that Raylene Ireland, DWS Executive Director just received word from the Division of Human Resource Management (DHRM) that wage benchmarks for DWS employees are going to be increased. This is fabulous news for employees because it gives headroom at the top for performance increases in the future. Initially, it will affect about 200 employees in DWS that are below the new minimum level; however, employees all the way up the line will be impacted.

Representative Goodfellow asked how this change would be funded?

Mr. Pierpont responded by stating that the cost to the Department is approximately \$205,000 and each region has been asked to cover its share within their respective personnel budgets – most of which will come from turnover savings.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Todd Henriksen spoke concerning DWS outsourcing jobs out of the Country. He then asked if the Council had a role to play in the decisions that were made.

Mr. Sullivan responded by stating that he has been meeting with the press and that the department has been in touch with the contractor. He had talked with the Director of the American Association of Call Centers (contractor) and discussed how the 4 India-based full time equivalents (FTE) came about. Mr. Sullivan then stated that the Department is taking this issue very seriously and is currently looking to address the situation without impacting services to the DWS constituency. DWS has asked if the services/jobs could be brought back to this

country and are awaiting cost estimates from the contractor. DWS is also looking at how it may potentially be able to be handled internally in the future. New Jersey wound up spending \$1.7 million extra to handle their services internally. Utah is saving \$135,000 a year – that translates to about 20 to 25 Utah residents or individuals that we can give services to directly. According to Mr. Sullivan, DWS is “between a rock and a hard place” with those 4 FTE’s and is currently looking to see what can be done to rectify the situation without creating a loss in services.

Mr. Henriksen stated that he feels outsourcing is certainly a very viable business operation and we need to pursue that.

Ms. Silver thanked Mr. Robson for responding to her questions.

Ms. Brothers stated that she finds it very interesting that the job growth has steadily grown in Tooele County; however, the DWS website job listings for Tooele has not reflected any new jobs listed for Tooele County for quite some time.

Mr. Henriksen responded that since his company, EnviroCare, posts new jobs on the DWS website every Friday there must be a problem with the system.

Ms. Conard stated that Kim Auberger, DWS Manager of Business Services, would be contacted and asked to look into the issue.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 1:54 p.m.